



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 5 November 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
5 NOVEMBER 1968

1. Cambodia

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2. South Vietnam

In a television appearance yesterday, Thieu reaffirmed the position he took regarding the Paris negotiations on 2 November. He argued that North Vietnamese propaganda since the halt began indicated that the enemy is proving more stubborn than ever. Touching on what is probably one of his major preoccupations, Thieu contended that Saigon's stand was proof that his government was not weak.

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This morning some 2,000 members of the Catholic Greater Solidarity Force paraded past the US Embassy demonstrating support for the government.

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Twelve rounds were reported fired from a Communist mortar in the southern part of the Demilitarized Zone this morning.

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3. Indonesia

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4. Jordan

The situation is even more fragile as Husayn moves to curtail terrorist activities in Amman. So far the King has cleaned out only the small splinter group responsible for Saturday's attack on our embassy.

The larger terrorist organizations are not opposing Husayn yet, and he says he is aiming only at those who cause trouble in the city itself or challenge his authority. The terrorists are jumpy, however, and could well begin shooting if they believe they are threatened by Jordanian security forces.

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5. Venezuela

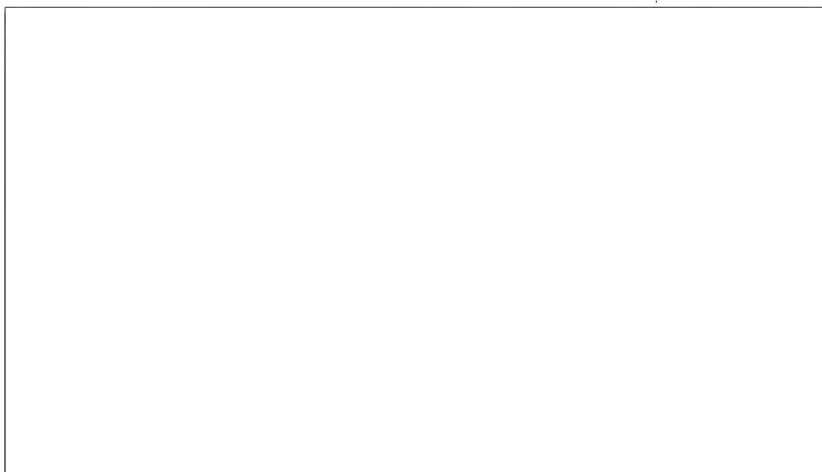
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6. Soviet Union -
France - Italy

The Soviets are trying to flog the French and Italian Communist parties back into line by cutting off financial subsidies to their party newspapers, L'Humanite and L'Unita. Both parties were highly critical of the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Soviet action will hurt, but neither party is likely to let it stop the presses.

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7. Dominican Republic



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8. Japan

On 27 November, Sato has to stand for re-election as president of his Liberal Democratic Party. Several factions are challenging him, but right now he looks like the winner. Should Sato lose, he would also have to step down as prime minister.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

5 November 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Air Defense: Hanoi's plans for air defense reaction to continuing flights by US aircraft over its territory remain unclear at this early date. There are signs that some air defense forces have orders to fire only if fired upon.

A message originated on 2 November by a North Vietnamese general believed to be associated with air defense matters cautioned personnel to remain vigilant, but ordered them not to fire on "any type of enemy aircraft that flies into the air space or waters of North Vietnam." The North Vietnamese message further states, however, that "if the enemy strikes, then we will strike back." "If not, even though they fly at low altitudes, you must tell the people to hold their fire."

It is unclear at the moment which air defense units this message is intended to include. US operational reports for 3 November show that an enemy surface-to-air battalion near Phuc Yen airfield launched two missiles at a high altitude US reconnaissance drone.

It may be that the North Vietnamese are still studying what the US intends to do in regard to aerial reconnaissance. A message on 3 November passed in surface-to-air communications referred to the US bombing halt and further stated that unknown personnel would meet from 2 to 6 November to evaluate the situation and implement a "new plan."

Meanwhile, a series of messages warning of a possible resumption of the bombing appeared in North Vietnamese military communications. A rear service unit in Thanh Hoa Province reported on 1 November that US aircraft had ceased bombing over all of North Vietnam. It instructed all hands, however, to keep to business as usual and be prepared to fight when "the enemy resumes bombing."

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A communiqué of 2 November passed to a logistics unit in southern North Vietnam attributed the bombing halt to the success enjoyed by Communist forces "in the South," but it further stated that units were to stay alert since after the presidential elections "American bombing in the North will resume."

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Paris Representation: The Vietnamese Communists are continuing to exploit Saigon's reluctance to join the Paris talks. Madame Binh, the head of the newly arrived Liberation Front delegation in Paris, assured newsmen that she was ready to attend next Wednesday's regularly scheduled meeting. Arguing along the same lines, the Hanoi party daily claimed on 4 November that the Front was fully competent to settle all the problems of South Vietnam. The newspaper commentary added that the "Thieu-Ky-Huong" clique was out of touch with the aspirations of the South Vietnamese people and would soon be overthrown. "A powerful mass movement is developing in the cities of South Vietnam, especially in Saigon, demanding their overthrow," said Hanoi.

The same line was picked up by North Vietnamese overseas representatives. The North Vietnamese consul general in New Delhi told a news conference yesterday that it made no difference whether Saigon showed up in Paris or not--the Liberation Front was "competent to settle all South Vietnamese problems."

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Communications: The Communists are continuing to augment their wire line communications network linking North Vietnam, Laos, and South Vietnam. A Communist rear service unit reported on 9 October that plans were being handed down for construction of wire lines in the Laos panhandle during the 1968-69 dry season, which has just started.

Overhead photography indicates that since late 1967 the Communists have completed at least 400 miles of open wire communication lines from North Vietnam into Laos and South Vietnam.

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Radios are continuing, however, to handle a large volume of communications and to provide backup for the wire line.

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Communist "Victory": The bombing halt continues to be treated as a Communist victory. A Hanoi broadcast reports that Pham Van Dong told a meeting of the Fatherland Front the cessation was "unconditional."

Communist propaganda in general is not focusing on the continuation of reconnaissance flights. A spokesman in Cairo claimed that North Vietnam would continue to shoot down such planes, but he did not dwell at length on the issue or demand that the flights be stopped. The Communists are now turning their propaganda guns on the issue of US troop withdrawal.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

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